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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography lists 29 documents which evaluate industry/business-sponsored free or inexpensive materials for the elementary schools. The majority of items listed are articles from periodicals although some books are included; with few exceptions, all were published in the 1970s. The bibliography is organized into three groups: those publications which either favor or criticize the use of free or inexpensive materials; those that provide insight into the selection of purchased materials to meet educational objectives; and those that provide background on the industrial-educational relationship. Recommendations are to survey the extent to which teachers are aware of the controversy over the use of free or inexpensive materials and to develop a workshop to help teachers recognize biased materials and nullify propaganda effects of otherwise useful materials. (Author/KC)

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FREE AND INEXPENSIVE MATERIALS
IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the course
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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this research paper to determine the value of free or inexpensive materials in the elementary schools and what the advantages and disadvantages were in using them. Over the years tremendous amounts of free or inexpensive materials have been developed by industry and various other agencies and made readily available to the school systems. The fact that the materials were well-publicized and free made them very appealing, and such materials were used extensively in classrooms throughout the country. Critics have claimed that industries have taken advantage of the situation to promote their products or services rather than providing educationally sound materials. Those who favored the use of free and inexpensive materials argued that teachers were responsible enough to be able to utilize the material creatively and effectively in spite of any bias they might contain.

How the Bibliography Was Organized. The bibliography was organized into three major groups of importance: (1) Those publications which were either in favor of or critical of the use of free or inexpensive materials, (2) Those that provided insight and background in the selection of purchased materials to meet educational objectives in the classroom, and (3) Those that provided background on the industrial-educational relationship.

Limitations to the Study. (1) Time was the major limitation in the study. More time was needed to completely research this subject. Also, this research paper would have greatly benefited by the conduct of a survey of elementary teachers to determine present attitudes toward the use of free or inexpensive materials in the elementary classroom. (2) Many of the sources did not specifically discuss free or inexpensive materials directed to the elementary grades even though children are most impressionable during this time in school. (3) No research was located which attempted to determine any effects of biased materials used in the elementary grades.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Favorable and Critical Publications

Bennett, James, "The Way I See It...Free Film Guides Are Propaganda Tools," Educational Leadership 37:196-199, December, 1979.

The author cited specific instances where source books of free films primarily represented one point of view concerning a subject. He suggested several film guide sources which presented alternative points of view, and listed ten specific actions that could be taken to prevent the biasing of information in the selection of free materials. Students should be made aware of potential bias in any point of view.

Bonnice, Joseph, "Watch Those 'Free' Materials," Business Education World 50:19, January/February, 1970.

Teachers were cautioned to use good judgment in their selection of supplementary materials. Three examples of commercial messages were given to illustrate the different levels of bias that may be present. Teachers needed to decide whether the materials contained bias or not and whether the advantages of using the materials outweighed the commercial implications. Although most materials contained bias, teachers could bring in other sources to show opposing points of view or use the materials to demonstrate to pupils that a bias did exist.

Burns, Marion, "What Did You Learn In School Today?" The Washington Post, July 6, 1978, sec. 3, p. 1,6.

The Executive Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest felt that most nutrition education in the schools was being derived from biased sources. As one example, teachers had literally turned over nutrition education to the National Dairy Council because the council's materials showed dairy products to be beneficial to everyone. Health experts have since decided that dairy products contain large amounts of fat, and may not be as good as claimed. Other examples were provided. Critics have asked the government to take a more active part in providing materials to be used in schools.

DuVall, Charles R., "A Comparative Study of School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures for 1965 and 1970 for Dealing With Supplementary Free Materials in School Districts in Cities With Population Over 100,000 in the United States," Research in Education, April, 1971 (ED 056 381).

The findings in this study included: (1) Most schools had board policies concerning supplementary free materials, (2) There was a slight increase in the number of schools permitting the use of free materials from 1965 to 1970, (3) In 1965, the principal mainly decided on the acceptability of the materials while the teachers had the primary job in 1970, and (4) Materials needed to be appropriate to school use and free of objectionable advertising.

"A Study of Teacher Opinions Concerning Selected Free Filmstrips Provided by the American Iron and Steel Institute to Schools Throughout the United States," Research in Education, August, 1972 (ED 072 992).

The study investigated teachers' attitudes towards the use of three filmstrips provided by the Iron and Steel Institute. The results indicated (1) a favorable response in the use of the filmstrips, (2) that most teachers had used the materials, (3) that most teachers felt they were of good quality and educationally beneficial, and (4) that the materials were well received by the persons who used them.

"A Study of Teacher Opinions and Evaluations Concerning Selected Free Printed Materials Provided by the American Iron and Steel Institute to Individuals Throughout the United States," Research in Education, September, 1973 (ED 083 084).

This study investigated teacher opinions of printed materials provided by the Iron and Steel Institute. The results indicated that these materials were used by the majority of teachers that received them, were believed to be sufficiently accurate, and would be used again in the future.

"A Survey of School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures for Dealing With Supplementary Free Materials in Selected Smaller School Districts in the United States," Research in Education, May 3, 1974 (ED 089 416).

The data gathered found that (1) only 29 percent of the respondents indicated existence of any policy, (2) 60 percent of the respondents indicated use of free materials was permitted, (3) the teacher and principal were mainly responsible for the selection and distribution of free materials, and (4) the materials needed to be relevant and of educational value to the school system.

DuVall, Charles R., and Krepel, Wayne J., Free Materials and Education, Educators Progress Service, Inc., Randolph, Wisconsin, 1978.

The authors favored the use of free materials in the schools. Teacher responsibility in the use of these materials was emphasized. The teacher was the key to the success or failure of any materials used in the classroom. The authors suggested ways free materials could be incorporated into instructional programs, provided many different sources for free materials, emphasized the need for a policy for teachers to use as a guide in selecting materials, and stressed the need for teachers to make thorough evaluations in their selection and use of free materials. Two evaluation checklists were provided for teacher use. The book also included a background of industry's involvement and a historical background of the use of free materials.

"Free Materials: A Response to Bennett," Educational Leadership 37:199,267, December, 1979.

The authors of this article felt that Bennett did not give teachers enough credit in selecting materials representing all sides of an issue. All materials, regardless of cost or source, contained bias. Teachers needed to continually make decisions about bias in any type of curricular material. Teachers must also take on the responsibility to present various points of an issue. Finally, any material, after use in the classroom, must be evaluated for its effectiveness.

Elam, Stanley, "Beware Mickey Mouse and Goofy, Propagandists Par Excellence," Phi Delta Kappan 61:377, February, 1980.

This editorial discussed research done by Sheila Harty of Ralph Nader's Center for Study of Responsive Law. Her studies have shown that corporations produce free and inexpensive materials for their own interests. Her thesis was that companies realized that school budgets were low and that teachers were always looking for ways to fill in the gaps in classroom instruction. This made selection of materials by teachers difficult since some companies conscientiously tried to produce adequate material whereas others had selfish interests.

Harty, Sheila, "How Industry Uses Teachers," American Teacher, October, 1977, p.23.

The financial crisis in the schools had encouraged industries to promote their products by providing free materials to schools. The author of this article felt that industry was taking advantage of the situation with biased information rather than providing sound educational materials. Little had been done to field test the materials on children nor had any evaluation been made available to the public. In the 1950's, two different associations provided pamphlets indicating a criteria for evaluating these materials. These pamphlets have since gone out of print. The author felt that further study of the quality of free materials was needed.

"Who Produced These Teaching Materials?" Today's Education 67:62-63, November, 1978.

The author felt that industry was taking advantage of school children as a captive audience to promote their products. There were no federal or state laws regulating the use of these materials. Most industry's evaluation and feedback was within the industry. She felt this should be of great concern to parents and educators.

Hucksters in the Classroom. A Review of Industry Propaganda in Schools, Center for Study of Responsive Law, Washington, D.C., 1979.

This author discussed specific examples of what she considered biased free materials in the areas of nutrition, energy, environment and economics. Numerous specific examples were provided in each of these areas. The attitudes of educators, government and private citizens toward the use of potentially biased materials were also covered. Various surveys and studies were attached to the report.

Hug, William, "Are They Appropriate? That's The Question," Today's Education 67:63-64, November, 1978.

This author supported the view of corporations. He felt that teacher creativity and ingenuity in using the materials was more important than the presence or absence of propaganda. Ways of collaborating with industry were suggested to improve policy and procedures for producing educational materials for classroom use.

J

Koon, Bruce, "Economics is...Keynes in Kindergarten? It's the Children Who Profit," The National Observer, May 2, 1977, p.8.

A recent emphasis has been placed on the teaching of economics in the elementary and/or high school, since most people have only a vague understanding of the principles of economics. Because of this emphasis, schools have been flooded with free or inexpensive materials that were all too often filled with propaganda.

Medsger, Betty, "The Free Propaganda That Floods the Schools," The Progressive 40:42-46, December, 1976.

The author cited numerous examples that showed specific biases in free or inexpensive materials. Parents should become more aware of the materials being presented in their children's schools and ensure that examples such as these were eliminated from the curriculum. Although corporations were financially capable to provide the material, it did not give them the right to flood the schools with such bias.

Mouat, Lucia, "Big Corporations Slip into U.S. Classrooms," Christian Science Monitor, August 16, 1978.

Some critics have felt that free educational materials provided by industry may have been educationally sound but tended to promote industry's product too much to be appropriate in the schools. Surveys, however, have indicated that most teachers use industry's materials in spite of their mix of accuracy and bias. Critics advocated teacher awareness and curriculum balance. Teachers needed more time and pre-service and in-service training to develop the expertise in selecting proper materials to achieve educational objectives.

Nader, Ralph, "The Fourth R of Learning in Consumer Education," The National Observer, May 2, 1977, p.11.

This article stressed that the fourth R was responsibility. It was the responsibility of schools to bring the outside world into the classroom and teach children how to relate to it. Learning the basic skills was important but it was also important to be able to interact intelligently with the world outside the school.

Rank, Hugh, "English Teachers Help Youngsters Evaluate Advertising Persuasion," Advertising Age 48:41,44, January 24, 1977.

The National Council of Teachers of English established a committee to help children cope with commercial propaganda. If children were prepared in advance to recognize the nature of advertising, they would be better able to analyze the propaganda and be aware of its persuasions. The author felt that anyone, to include large corporations, had a right to persuade, and that being aware of this, teachers should plan to prepare children to adequately cope with advertising claims in their future lives.

Richards, Bill, "Critics Leery of Teaching With Corporate Freebies," The Washington Post, December 3, 1979, sec. A, p.2.

Free materials provided by corporations may have contained excessive advertising, and not have been in the best interests of the pupils, according to critics. One industry official conceded that while advertising was present in most materials, the materials should be used depending upon the teacher's decisions as to whether the material supported the instructional goals.

Schwab, Priscilla, "Introducing Johnny and Mary to the World of Business," Nation's Business 66:57-59, January, 1978.

The United States Chamber of Commerce offered an educational kit called "Economics for Young Americans." Educating students on how and why our economic system worked was their objective. The kit included filmstrips, cassettes, a teaching guide, and a personal visit from a businessman from the Chamber of Commerce, who attempted to explain his role in the business community. While the presentation was undoubtedly pro-business, it appeared to be readily accepted by students and teachers in most school systems where it was presented.

"Time To Act Positively on Children's Advertising," editorial, Advertising Age 49:14, February 13, 1978.

Many people felt that there was an imbalance in advertising directed to children; i.e., there was too much emphasis placed on promoting products and not enough placed on the health and safety consequences of using those products. Recommendations by the Federal Trade Commission were to be made to regulate children's advertising. The article recommended that advertisers needed to get off the defensive and do something to strengthen their credibility. If an imbalance existed in advertising, something could be done about it.

Weiss, Brian, "Free, Free, Free, Free...Stock Your Curriculum When Your Piggy Bank is Empty," Learning 7:120-124, August/September, 1978.

The author provided the reader with ideas of where to look for free materials and encouraged teacher creativity in the use of the materials. Sources were listed under several general topic areas.

"Warning: Freebies May Be Dangerous to Your Curriculum," Learning 8:141, August/September, 1979.

The author stressed that freebies were not always what they appeared to be. Care must be taken in the selection of free materials. Not all material was usable. Steps that industries could take to insure the usability of their materials were suggested.

"Now Is the Time for Freebies," Learning 8:132-133, August/September, 1979.

The use of free materials was strongly encouraged to supplement materials normally available to teachers. A key point made by the author was that free materials from several sources can often be combined into a complete lesson unit. A listing of sources of free materials covering a variety of subjects was also contained in the article.

Whitham, Neil, "And How One Class Responded," American Teacher, October, 1974, pp.7,10.

This article provided information about a particular fifth grade teacher and how he opposed subtle propaganda. This teacher felt that children needed to study propaganda in advertising, business and politics. Students needed to learn to be skeptical, without being cynical, of information that will be presented to them throughout their lives.

Publications Covering
Selection of Materials

Gall, Meredith, "Competency-Based Teacher Education Materials: How Available? How Usable? How Effective?" Journal of Teacher Education 30:58-61, May-June, 1979.

"Competency-based means that the materials are designed to train teachers in specific, behaviorally defined teaching skills." Research indicated that more often than not the CBTE materials were unavailable or were difficult to obtain. Most of the material that was received was vague and incomplete and the effectiveness of the material was questioned because of a lack of evaluation reports. The use of these materials was a costly investment and the experiences of the researchers led them to recommend the development of better procedures.

Jacobs, Ronald, "Developing Media for Learning," School Shop 37:30-33, January, 1978.

Many teachers turned to audiovisual media to enhance their instruction. Often, however, results fell short of expectations. The article discussed methods to assist teachers in designing better media programs.

Komoski, P. K., "Realities of Choosing and Using Instructional Materials," Educational Leadership 36:45-48, October, 1978.

Research indicated that instructional materials were used in classrooms. In order to obtain quality materials, time, money and skills were needed to successfully change the curriculum. The value of materials was directly proportional to the investment made in choosing the materials. Greater achievement was shown by students who had teachers directly involved in choosing materials than those whose teachers had no part in the selection process. A commitment by local agencies to provide sufficient time and money to properly search out and select new curriculum materials was essential for a successful curriculum change.

McLaren, M. Bruce, "Film's Place in the Curriculum," Audiovisual Instruction 24:47, May 1979.

Films could play an important part in the classroom as long as they were used properly. While poor teachers may use films to only occupy time, good teachers would select films that enhanced the achievement of their educational objectives. Because of its nature, visual media could be used to foster student interest and further inquiry much better than conventional teaching methods when properly utilized.

Schwartz, S.E., "Evaluation Process for Instructional Materials," Journal for Special Education 16:19-21, Fall, 1979.

The selection of materials was found to be confusing due to advertisements and misleading sales pitches. The article stressed the importance of evaluating materials before they were purchased and provided a procedure for evaluating them to insure that the materials actually met the needs of teachers and students.

Soulier, J. Steven, "Are You Wasting Your Time on Handouts?" Audiovisual Instruction 24:18-19, April, 1979.

Many teachers used handouts, but most handouts were almost worthless. An effective handout met certain criteria which were discussed in the article. Well-designed handouts were one of the most effective tools of instruction.

Publications Covering
The Industrial-Educational Relationship

Ayars, Albert, "How Business and Industry are Helping the Schools,"
Saturday Review 47:57-58, October 17, 1964.

Rapport between industry and schools was at a minimum prior to World War II because educators felt that industry was merely trying to promote its products. Attitudes have changed, however, and industry has found that more effective schools and a closer community relationship has great long term benefits. Professional organizations helped the partnership by setting standards for acceptable materials and services. Some industries have staffed their education departments with professional educators in order to provide better service to the schools. Teachers, however, must accept business and industry materials and study them critically to make sure they fit in with the curriculum. Considerable sums of money were spent by industry. Relationships have improved and both industry and the schools are the beneficiaries.

Burt, Samuel, "You May Not Agree, But...Education and Industry Can Make a Great Team," Today's Education 59:34-36, December, 1970.

Studies have indicated that in the past industry involvement in the school system was treated with suspicion. Industry at one time may have used the schools as market places for their products but over time industry's perspectives have been broadened. Industry has realized the need for good schools in order to obtain educated employees. Emphasis has been placed on establishing a working rapport between industry and schools. Educators also recognized the benefits of using industry's assets. Today both industry and education are working more harmoniously to their mutual benefit.

Gilkey, Richard, "Instructional Media. Considerations for Administrators When Big Business Moves into Education," The Clearing House 45:191-192, November, 1970.

Business firms promoted their instructional systems as sure answers to educational problems. These instructional systems were smoothly presented and focused on reading and computational skills. Advantages and disadvantages in using these systems were discussed. Before using such techniques, administrators were cautioned to review the effect on the entire curriculum, define the long term goals, insure the program met the needs of both students and society, and that the new program was adequately tested before a commitment was made to proceed with it.

Krich, Percy, "Education--Servant of Industry," School and Society 97:280-281, Summer, 1969.

This article discussed the relationship that existed between education and industry. Big business realized the potential marketplace in the schools and provided products for the schools and job markets into which students could be absorbed. Schools provided the best possible training for the students to be able to assume these jobs in business. Industry tended to dominate the schools, since industry had a greater effect on society. Society largely determined the role of the schools. However, both schools and business relied upon each other, since neither could successfully exist without the other.

Nelson, Bert, "Industry and Education: Satisfaction or Fear?" School and Society 96:400-401, November 9, 1968.

In the last fifteen years, industry recognized a vast market in education. Industry, in some instances, attempted to apply a systems approach to evaluate/regulate the educational process, and this has been done in cooperation with educational organizations. However, such an approach cannot be applied to the educational system as it would be applied to a business. The educational process dealt with individuals; business dealt, ultimately, with profit or loss. An example of a periodical geared directly to those within the school systems who had financial responsibilities was presented to demonstrate that businesses would compete for the dollars available from the educational systems.

SUMMARY

Conclusions. The following conclusions were drawn after evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of using free or inexpensive materials in the elementary classroom: (1) Free or inexpensive materials, as well as purchased materials, do contain some bias. (2) The ultimate goal of industry is to make a profit, but industry remains dependent upon good schools to provide quality workers. Because of this dependency, many industries have attempted to improve the quality of their materials. (3) Free or inexpensive materials can be of great value if the teacher ensures that the materials meet the educational objectives of the unit being taught. (4) Free or inexpensive materials should be selected, used, and evaluated utilizing the same criteria as for textbooks and other purchased materials. (5) The teacher is the key to the proper utilization of free or inexpensive materials in the elementary classroom.

Recommendations. The following recommendations are presented based upon the above conclusions: (1) A survey should be developed to determine the extent to which elementary teachers are aware of the controversy over the use of free or inexpensive materials. (2) The development of a workshop or course of study for teachers in order to inform them how to recognize biased materials and methods to nullify the propaganda effects of these materials would seem to be beneficial. Teachers who are well

informed about the potential limitations of free materials will be better prepared to wisely select the materials that will best enhance their educational objectives in the classroom. (3) Attempts should be made to develop a survey to evaluate the effects, if any, of biased material in the elementary classroom on the pupil.